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FORREST SAWYER: It has been a very powerful story about infiltration by East German intelligence agents into the West German intelligence community. And now all of the West intelligence community is continuing to work on damage control, to see just how bad the problem is, as new information comes to light about the growing spy scandal in West Germany.

We thought we'd have a look at this to help understand the possible effects of the scandal on all of international security.

With us is Helmut Sorge. He is a foreign editor for the West German news weekly Der Spiegel. He is joining us from Hamburg this morning. And in Washington, the former Director of the CIA, Admiral Stansfield Turner. He is a consultant to CBS News.

Mr. Sorge, if I could begin with you this morning. Let's have a look at the fallout from all of this. We see now that as high a man as Hans Tiedge, which was the counterintelligence chief for West Germany, has now gone to East Germany, revealing names of counterintelligence agents.

How deep do you think this has sunk into the intelligence community?

HELMUT SORGE: Let me say first that the defection of this gentleman is not something new in Germany. We have had a spy very close to our Chancellor at that time, Willy Brandt, who also gave the information Mr. Brandt knew to his East German masters.

But I can only say that for the intelligence services in general, it must be a reconfirmation that Germany is a place where we have more spies than anywhere else. Why do we have more spies than anywhere else? It probably is we have a geographical situation which is totally different than anybody else, with the exception maybe of Korea. We have Germans crossing the border from one side to the other. And it's very, very difficult for the intelligence services, even if they're very, very careful, to scrutinize everybody who comes from East Germany.

It's a problem we'll have to face in the future, even if the intelligence services, as they are, will be now reformed, reorganized. The leaks will remain for a long period of time, as long as the situation in Germany remains as it is.

SAWYER: Certainly there are people who are saying that this affair is worse than what happened in the Brandt administration and that it has caused more damage.

What's the political fallout from it?

SORGE: The political fallout, for the moment, is very uncertain. There is a meeting today of Mr. Kohl and his Cabinet. Whether the Minister of Interior, who is responsible for these services, will resign is doubtful. But certainly the head of the intelligence service, who is directly responsible for this mess, probably will resign.

But the fallout, immediate fallout for the government is uncertain. The question is whether the relationships with East Germany will suffer. I don't believe they will -- maybe temporarily -- because the exchanges with East Germany are so important to West Germany, as well. But I don't think this will cause damage in the relation in the long term.

SAWYER: Admiral Stansfield Turner, you are a former CIA Director. You're joining us as a consultant to CBS.

As you look at this from outside the CIA, obviously, how do you assess the damage? How bad is it?

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Well, I think it's pretty serious to German intelligence. It'll expose their agents in East Germany. It will make it more difficult for them to counter East German and other communist agents in West Germany. Very serious for them.

Now, other intelligence services have a practice of not sharing detailed information about their own spying activities with other countries. So I don't think it will hurt other people who work and operate with the Germans.

I think the problem here is what Mr. Sorge has said: that West Germany is an open society, just like we are, and all open societies are vulnerable, more so than closed societies, because communist can come to our country and make contacts with our people. West Germany, as he said, is particularly vulnerable because of their geography.

But in this case, we also must acknowledge there was a real sloppiness on the part of West German intelligence. This first gentleman who's been exposed, Mr. Tiedge, is one who had alcoholism problems, had financial problems, had psychological problems; and the West German intelligence just didn't handle it well. They knew he was a problem.

SAWYER: What about that, Mr. Sorge? There are people who are saying that Mr. Tiedge had these problems. He was obviously very ripe to be recruited by East German intelligence. And for that matter, the security operations of West German intelligence have not been strict enough in checking out whether people are in that kind of situation.

Is that fair?

SORGE: I think there was an old-buddy network. The head of the intelligence service at that particular time was a friend of his. He probably wanted to protect him.

The excuse today is if they would have fired him from the job, he would have also been able to go back to East Germany, or go to East Germany and be a traitor there.

So, whatever argument you turn -- whichever way you turn the argument, it's absolutely true what the Admiral says. It is an absolute disaster of how the intelligence services have handled the affair.

If you look at the statistics over the last 18 months, apparently, almost 200 of West Germany's agents in East Germany have been arrested. And presumably, Mr. Tiedge took a list of another 160 persons to East Germany. So we have really suffered a lot of damage which for a long time we will not be able to repair. Because who today would join voluntarily an intelligence mission, knowing that there are so many leaks, knowing that there are so many spies?

I feel very sorry for the people who have to recruit new people in East Germany for their missions. They will have a very hard time, and our intelligence-gathering mission has been very, very highly damaged.

SAWYER: Admiral Turner, if you were back directing the

4

CIA and you had the President's ear, would you recommend that he be more reticent in sharing information with West German intelligence now?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I'm afraid we have to look at it that way. That's a very bad record they've had for a very long period of time.

Mr. Sorge is certainly right that you have to be cautious when you suspect one of your own people because he may just bolt to the other side. But in this case, the evidence was so strong, that they not only should have placed him out of the intelligence cycle, but they should have kept a track on him very carefully to stop him before he could cross the border to East Germany.

SAWYER: Just a few seconds left, Admiral Turner.

Names of counterintelligence agents are now, I presume, given to the East German intelligence operations. Could people die because of this?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, yes. Very likely that could happen. It's a great misfortune.

SAWYER: Admiral Turner, Mr. Sorge, thank you for joining us.